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SUBJECT: SUPPORTING NORWAY'S ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

SUMMARY

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**¶1.** Norway continues to expand its anti-trafficking efforts, which include government funding of NGO-run programs, media campaigns and intensive law enforcement training. Despite such preventative measures, trafficking does exist, as indicated by a recently publicized trafficking case in the city of Trondheim (located in central Norway). Recognizing the importance of supporting Norway's anti-trafficking measures, Post recently completed several outreach events, including Ambassadorial visits to NGOs assisting trafficking victims. In addition, the Ambassador and Mrs. Whitney attended the FBI-sponsored, two-day conference, "Sexual Exploitation: Victims and Perpetrators" held at the offices of Kripes (the Norwegian law enforcement division handling such cases). The Ambassador also hosted a reception acknowledging the conference, drawing together national law enforcement officials and members of prominent NGOs.

GOVERNMENT AND NGO ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

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**¶2.** Norway is a Tier 1 country in the annual Trafficking in Persons Report. Norwegian officials estimate there are about 100 trafficked victims per year. The recent Trondheim anti-trafficking case demonstrates some links between female prostitution and trafficking. Actual numbers of trafficking victims who are forced into prostitution are unknown. Prostitution is generally legal in Norway (although pimping and operating a brothel are illegal). An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 prostitutes are in Norway (65% of which are foreigners). According to NGO sources, the number of foreign-born prostitutes increased dramatically over the last five years. Recognizing the need to combat trafficking, the Norwegian government adopted Action Plans to Combat Trafficking in 2003 and 2005. The Plans coordinate the efforts and resources of various governmental ministries. Under the Plans, trafficking victims are offered a 45 day "reflection period," during which they may reevaluate their situation and consider cooperating with the police to prosecute the trafficking organizers. During this period, foreign victims cannot be deported. Victims may also be granted relief from deportation by applying for asylum. In 2005, the government prosecuted 8 trafficking cases. Traffickers may receive a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison, which may be increased to 10 years depending on aggravating circumstances. Traffickers convicted of slavery may receive a prison term of up to 21 years.

**¶3.** The Norwegian government recently announced increased media efforts and training, with a goal of alerting society to the dangers of trafficking. The government, in accordance

with the Action Plans, will launch an anti-trafficking media campaign in April. Arranged by Norway's Ministry for Children and Equality, the campaign targets young male students and military recruits. Minister Krait Bekkemelem noted in a recent newspaper interview that the campaign's goals include providing "good and objective information" about the health risks involved and the plight of women engaged in trafficking. The campaign seeks to reverse a perceived trend of increased prostitution. The Ministry of Defense is also implementing special anti-trafficking measures, including providing information materials to schools, while also giving Norwegian soldiers participating in international operations (who may be exposed to trafficking issues) anti-trafficking information.

¶4. The Norwegian government is considering amendments to the 2005 Action Plan. These amendments would extend the 45 day reflection period to 90 days for those trafficking victims who testify against the trafficking organizers. The government may also allow these victims the option of permanent residency in Norway. Critics are concerned that women will feign trafficking abuse in order to gain permanent residency. Post will continue to report on related developments.

¶5. Government funding supports NGOs such as the Rosa Project and ProSenter. Rosa, established in 2005, provides information and assistance to trafficking victims (most notably counseling and shelter opportunities) throughout Norway. In its first year, the Project directly assisted 20 victims, while handling approximately 645 telephone inquiries. Rosa placed 18 women in government-funded long-term shelters. A major fundraising effort to support Rosa involves a nail polish campaign, where famous female Norwegian celebrities model the polishes. Proceeds are directed to a special fund used for social efforts to support trafficked women. Another notable NGO is ProSenter, which is organized to assist men and women engaged in prostitution. The center provides counseling, support and therapy, while emphasizing health education. With the use of cultural mediators, ProSenter conducts an extensive outreach program, often focusing on migrant women. These mediators are particularly useful, able to connect to victims by understanding the prostitute's culture and language. ProSenter presently employs Russian, Albanian, Dominican, Thai and Nigerian cultural mediators.

#### TRAFFICKING HITS TRONDHEIM

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¶6. On March 29, two males (one Norwegian, the other Eastern European) were detained in Trondheim and charged with trafficking. A third Eastern European was charged but not detained. In 2005, Trondheim was shaken by a case in which two men were convicted for trafficking Estonian women. Trondheim Police Chief Ove Sem publicly disclosed that "this is a classical trafficking case with several victims." In addition to apprehending the alleged traffickers, female prostitutes were driven by authorities to a secret location for protection. Post will continue to report on this situation as it develops.

#### POST'S ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

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¶7. Post continues its intensive anti-trafficking efforts, with Ambassadorial visits to NGOs and public support of joint U.S. and Norwegian law enforcement cooperation. The Ambassador and Mrs. Whitney have toured the Rosa and ProSenter facilities. The Ambassador provided interviews to local newspapers, which produced positive media coverage. The newspaper Dagbladet quoted the Ambassador as saying that trafficking is "Modern slavery, which is against my view of right and wrong...it is a tragedy and the trafficking victims have to be supported as best we can by society." TV2 Nettavisen published a story noting the Ambassador's tour, and quoted him as saying "Trafficking is the slavery of our time and ought to be handled the same way as slavery based

upon race." In his press remarks, the Ambassador emphasized various U.S.-Norwegian cooperative efforts in the fight against trafficking, including NATO's "zero tolerance" trafficking policy. In addition, he referenced Post's continuing outreach efforts, including supporting Voluntary Visitors to the U.S. and hosting digital video conferences. These efforts contribute to information exchanges between leading Norwegian and U.S. law enforcement officials, and members of prominent Norwegian NGOs. Post also assisted the FBI-sponsored sexual exploitation conference at Kripes on March 30 and March 31. The Ambassador, accompanied by Mrs. Whitney, opened the conference, and sponsored a well-attended reception.

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WHITNEY